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ABSTRACT

In the course of the Six Institutions' Consortium 3-year curriculum development project in Afro-American Studies, it became abundantly clear to faculty and student participants that the most viable curriculum that can be developed must be interdisciplinary. In response to this conviction, a seminar was held to emphasize the need for an approach to the development of a core curriculum in Afro-American Studies that will span the disciplines. A panel of three eminent scholars in humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences made presentations, and engaged participants in stimulating discussions. This document presents the proceedings of the seminar. (Author/HS)

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Towards an Interdisciplinary Core Curriculum in Afro-American Studies

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THE AFRICAN AND AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES CURRICULUM PROJECT

In the fall of 1969, the Six Institutions' Consortium began a three-phase program on African and Afro-American Studies Curriculum, supported by a grant from the United States Office of Education as authorized by Title III, Higher Education Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-329).

This project is based on the continuing interest and purpose of the Consortium to pool the resources and strengthen member institutions in the direction of achieving the overall quality improvement and services that they render to undergraduate education, in-service teacher education, and faculty development.

Essentially the entire project has to do with curriculum revision and cultural enrichment with specific subject-matter emphasis during each of the phases. The first phase focused on the *Social Sciences* and *English* and *Literature;* the second on the *Arts* and *Humanities;* and the third on the *Life Sciences*. Each phase spans an academic year during which resources and facilities are provided to enhance a proper and legitimate accomplishment of the curricular task. The project features an in-service education for the faculty participants which enables them to improve their skills in curriculum building and enrich their cultural background, knowledge and resources regarding African and Afro-American Studies.

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TOWARDS
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CORE CURRICULUM
IN
AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

Proceedings of a Seminar held at
Bennett College, Greensboro, N.C.

April 29, 1972

Editor: Ewa U. Eko

SIX INSTITUTIONS' CONSORTIUM

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PREFACE

The quest for self-fulfillment and developmental growth among undergraduate students in higher education belies a need for synthesizing knowledge. In the train of student demands for relevance and reform in higher education, was an indictment of the petty fragmentation of knowledge that characterizes today's curricula. Students are looking for an educational process that will provide them with broad perspectives from the various disciplines on any given idea, issue or problem. As they demand curricula, that would give them a basis for knowing who they are and what they can do about issues that affect their lives, the need for interdisciplinary approaches becomes important and urgent.

In the course of the Six Institutions Consortium's three-year curriculum development project in Afro-American Studies, it became abundantly clear to faculty and student participants that the most viable curriculum that can be developed must be interdisciplinary. In response to this conviction, a Seminar was held to emphasize the need for an approach to the development of core curriculum in Afro-American Studies that will span the disciplines. Under the chairmanship of Dr. George Breathett, Professor of History and Chairman of the Division of Social Sciences of Bennett College, a panel of three eminent scholars in humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences made presentations, and engaged participants in stimulating discussions. The Consortium was encouraged by the favorable comments of participants on the effectiveness of the Seminar to offer the proceedings herein for all who are vitally interested in pursuing the development of this curricular prospect in higher education.

Ewa U. Eko, Coordinator
Six Institutions' Consortium

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Seminar was held as part of the Consortium's African and Afro-American Studies Curriculum Project, funded by the United States Office of Education as authorized by Title III, Higher Education Act of 1965. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Office of Education, and no official endorsement of that Office should be inferred.

Our sincere appreciation is due to the program participants, George Breathett, Thelma Roundtree, Alfred Spriggs, and Stanley Smith for contributing their time and talent to the proceedings. To the Consortium Staff, especially Miss Frances Harris, who made the preparation of this seminar's proceedings possible, we also extend our appreciation.

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An Introductory Statement

by

George Breathett

One writer siad that the American college is on the psychiatrist's couch undergoing extensive analysis these days. Another study warns bluntly that the traditional teacher-student relationships are breaking down, if indeed they have not already done so, and that numerous crises are seriously threatening all curriculum patterns and organizational stuctures in colleges and universities. Still another professor states, with both concern and resignation, that the teaching process and the pursuit of a given curriculum as we now know them are on their last legs, that machines will have taken over by the end of the century, with people educating themselves, while studying and learning only what they as individuals deem important. Students, in a similar vein, are saying that they find many of their academic experiences painful, and that course offerings are colse to being unenjoyable, unstimulating and unchallenging.

Simultaneously, teachers as they assume their responsibilities as curriculum makers, feel caught up in serious binds about what they choose to call their academic value systems vis-a-vis course offerings, requirements, and their general attitudes relative to what students should be about. Both students and

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professors are experiencing difficulty finding real alternatives to entrenched ideas about general education and major field requirements. As professors and students we are belatedly, to say the least, becoming increasingly anxious. We are anxious because of the necessity of changing our perceptions, educational and otherwise, to recognize the long overdue need to instill in ourselves and our students a sensitivity to the social ills that have troubled us all along, and particularly as they should have been reflected in our teaching strategies. This is particularly true in the area of Afro-American studies. And it is regrettable that the real impetus for change in this area of academic pursuit came primarily from students, often accompanied by unrest and violence.

Curriculum-wise, however, we must not meander over our canyons of despair and faulty communication, nor our plateaus where there exists at times inarticulate failure. For when it comes to change in any direction, we must remember that education remains the most conservative of the social institutions and resists change within the structure of academia, i.e., curriculum, the pace of such change has been snail-like at the least, and certainly like the five mile run at best, where record time is still measured in minutes as opposed to seconds. In this same light, as one looks at Afro-American programs and curricula in most colleges, it must be understood that they have grown like Topsy, reflecting too often the single ideas of a group of vocal activists.

As we look at an interdisciplinary approach to curricula in Afro-American studies, stress must be continually placed on the interrelatedness of all knowledge. Afro-American studies curricula through their offerings must emphasize the institutional nature of society, and draw upon all other areas as their kith and kin. This means that adequacy and effectiveness in the Afro-American area demands of its participants broad liberal arts bases in the humanities, sciences and social sciences. A balance between the traditional and behavioral approaches must be also provided. Additionally, a research

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component should be part and parcel of any interdisciplinary approach to Afro-American Studies. Major efforts must be directed toward the fundamental learnings and knowledges that will permit the student to move later into specialized areas and given career pursuits from a broad and solid operational base.

Finally, with regard to Afro-American Studies teaching and curricula, all of us realize how important it is for some to appear scholarly and oftimes esoteric in what they say and/or propose. This gives an air of profundity to the most shopworn platitudes and a certain panache to the professor who wishes to set up intelligibility as a criterion of top-flight education. Let us not make this continually true of our Afro-American curricula, an area fraught with emotionalism and where students may find cause to take us to task. When students feel that they are being told in full what is actually being done or planned in a curriculum area, along with the reasons for such planning or action, they may disagree; but, are more likely to understand our rationales and respect them. An interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of Afro-American studies demands this.

As we move further in the Third Invitational Workshop on African and Afro-American Studies sponsored by the Six Institutions' Consortium, one can be assured that the participants and lecturers will bring similar kinds of observations to bear on the theme. For in the final analysis, a curriculum is meaningless unless it accomplishes a given end.

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Notes on Contributors I

GEORGE BREATHETT, professor of History and chairman of the Division of Social Sciences at Bennett College, holds the Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Iowa. Author of the *Religious Missions in Colonial French Saint Domingue*, and *A Social Studies Handbook*, his works have been published in many historical, social science and higher education journals. Additionally, he has twenty articles in the current edition of *Encyclopedia International*. He holds numerous memberships in professional and honor societies, and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Social and Behavioral Scientists*. Dr. Breathett has served as visiting and guest lecturer at leading institutions throughout the country and has directed several specifically funded programs, including the Afro-American Institute.

STANLEY SMITH, Dean of the University and Professor of Sociology at Fisk University, holds the Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Washington State University. He is a former president of the Association of Social and Behavorial Scientists and editor of the *Journal of Social and Behavorial Scientists*. He has made significant contributions to the academic world, through his work in curriculum organization and reform in several schools, and as one of the first to organize Social Welfare and Social Work curricula in undergraduate schools. His published works have appeared in major scholarly journals in his field.

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Perspectives From The Social Sciences

by

Stanley H. Smith

Afro-American Studies must serve a significant role and function in order to justify its existence on the curricular scene of any college. It must be directly related to some of the broad and specific educational objectives of higher education. This is understandable in terms of a functional definition of education. In very broad terms, it can be considered a process whereby persons become functioning members of a society. In order to achieve this, the student internalizes appropriate skills, including interpersonal competence. This will ostensibly facilitate the functioning process. When placed within this context, it becomes difficult to draw rigid lines of demarcation between education, learning and the socialization process. They are closely interrelated. Functioning capabilities should be directly related to behavior. As one becomes educated, attitudes and consequently behavior will be affected. Learning will be influenced by personality structure. Some types of personality structure might, in certain social situations, be more conducive to specific kinds of learning experiences.

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It is, therefore, difficult to learn effectively if one has not developed a feeling of self-confidence and a positive ego identity. Personalities lacking these traits experience varying degrees of difficulty in the learning process. If one is convinced that the racial group in which one holds membership is inferior and has made no meaningful contributions to society, it is difficult to provide the kinds of positive approaches to learning which will insure success. If, on the other hand, other groups and persons regard you as inferior because of your membership in a racial group, they will behave towards you as if failure is inevitable and will tend to have mediocre expectations of your performance. Under these conditions, it is relatively easy to fulfill the prophecy.

One very important role that Afro-American Studies play is to demonstrate the historical existence of a cultural heritage of a group that has made very important and significant contributions to world civilization and that it is highly possible for history to repeat itself through the efforts of other persons holding membership in that group. Exposures to African and Afro-American History can be most rewarding when approached with this frame of reference.

This approach has specific relevance for the value of exposing Whites to Afro-American and African History. It will most probably move them away from feelings of ethnocentrism and erroneous superiority feelings to a more realistic stance of tolerance of and/or appreciation for the contributions of other racial and ethnic groups. It is highly conceivable that the future of the American society might very well be contingent on the extent to which the critical need to expose whites to this kind of education is realized.

The above approach is based on the basic assumption that there is a systematic body of knowledge existing in African and Afro-American studies and that, therefore, it has merit and justification in any learning situation or intellectual setting. By definition, a position must be taken that this systematic body of knowledge is of an interdisciplinary nature.

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From an interdisciplinary behavioral perspective it might be of significance to approach Afro-American Studies within the perspective of Race and Culture Contacts. This frame of reference is concerned with what happens when different races and/or ethnic groups meet in certain specific ecological or geographical settings - in this case, the African setting.

More specifically, it will be important to account for from a historical standpoint, how the meeting came about and the conditions and circumstances which led to the meeting. The contemporary significance and the relevance of these psycho-socio-historical phenomena must be constantly and consistently taken into consideration. The functional relevance of the above must be explored with these students.

As a case in point, the resultants of the meeting of different racial groups in Africa will be more meaningfully understood if the Islamic Expansion is examined as an important historical phenomenon. The immediate successors of Mohammed under the banner of equality and brotherhood invaded and conquered the Northwestern part of Africa and reached the Atlantic Ocean by 681 A.D. By 711 A.D. they crossed the straits of Gibraltar and both invaded Southern and Central France when Charles Martel, in 732 A.D., defeated the Islamic forces at the Battle of Tours. The Islams were then forced to confine their activities for more than seven hundred years to the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal. The people of the Iberian Peninsula were then exposed to peoples with dark pigmentation for a long period of time and respected and admired them for their learning, scholarship and overall contributions to world civilization.

This respect was further heightened when Prince Henry, the Navigator and his Iberian Explorers came into contact with the highly developed civilizations of West Africa between 1416 - 1460. This technically heralded the beginning of the Expansion of Europe.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 shifted power to Northern and Northwestern Europe and shifted the Expansion of Europe from the Latin to the Anglo-

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Saxon dominance. Race and Color then became significant issues and obviously with ethnocentric emphasis on Anglo-Saxon values.

Racism in Western Civilization has to be understood within this context. The classic pronouncement of Arthur De Gobineau in his Inequality of the Human Races evolved from this historical background and is still relevant. This doctrine took the position that race is the primary determiner of differences in culture, in civilization, in important contributions, can be explained by racial differences. Races are unequal. All Whites are superior to all non-Whites, but among Whites, Anglo-Saxons or Aryans are superior to all non-Anglo Saxons or non-Aryans. Races are meant to be separate according to some cosmic plan.

Race then was emphasized in sociological and anthropological terms and the biological differences were given social and psychological interpretations to prove superiority and inferiority. The myth of race bearing this connotation and denotation perpetuated itself and served as a convenient rationalization and justification for exploitation. Race, then, according to Ashley Montagu was a dangerous myth.

This fixation on race and color was deeply imbedded in the psyche of Western man and was seemingly the direct resultant of the Expansion of Europe. The emotional concern with color and race is quite evident in the writings of the English writers from Chaucer to Milton Shakespeare, seemingly articulating the feelings and thoughts of the average Englishman of his day provided many examples of these racial and color expressions. The King in Love's Labor Lost spoke of Black as the "badge of Hell." Macbeth in anger shouted to his servants, "The devil damn thee Black." Many of the characters in Othello, including Brabanilio, Roderigo, and Iago referred to Othello and his color in derogatory terms.

The Judaic-Christian religion buttressed and supported the negative connotation of Black when it became associated with evil, sin, dirt, vis a vis White, which was associated with goodness, purity and cleanliness.

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It is understandable, therefore, that a group in the position to do so, would allocate unto itself the terminology White with all of the positive Westernized denotations and connotations, in spite of the fact that this group could be more scientifically described as pink. Within this framework also, the designation of the term black to a dominated group is equally understandable.

Centuries of reinforcement concerning the positive aspects of Whiteness and the negative aspects of Blackness have perpetuated false feelings of superiority on the part of persons who call themselves White and feelings of powerlessness and negative ego-identities on the part of persons who are called Black.

It is within this context that one is able to assess the significance of the Black Power philosophy, which was articulated with some intensity in the mid-1960's. Recognizing the fruitlessness and the unrealism in expecting a group to give up voluntarily a self-designation and self-defintion which has meant so much to it, the hopelessness of getting this group to call itself White became readily apparent. The emphasis was, therefore, placed on accepting responsibility for its own destiny and future and to make the determination of how and what it wanted to be called. Blacks have, therefore, decided that they preferred to call themselves Black and that according to them, the denotation and connotation must refer to everything that is good and true.

It is recognized that anti-Black values had become institutionalized in Western Civilization and were prevalent in all of the basic social institutions of the White, Westernized society. Radical institutional changes must be made so that positive Black values will now permeate and occupy integral positions in the basic social institutions of the Black community. This, it is strongly felt, could only be accomplished through the purposive utilization and implementation of the principles of community organization and community development.

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Afro-American Study serves a very useful function in higher education and is in keeping with basic educational objectives. It is felt that it will enhance the learning process of Black students by affecting their behavior in very positive ways by giving them a degree of self-confidence which is related to effective learning. Although by definition, interdisciplinary, it is a systematic body of knowledge, particularly when the approach is within the framework of what happens when different races and ethnic groups come in contact with each other in the African setting. In order to describe and analyze this phenomenon, it is necessary to integrate the disciplines of History, Sociology, Anthropology, Biology, Psychology and the Humanities. This rigorous approach to learning and the educational process could be intellectually and functionally rewarding.

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Perspectives From The Humanities

by

Thelma Roundtree

In considering an interdisciplinary core and the reason that the interdisciplinary core has come to be a part of the American educational innovation, I would first like to say something about the origin of interdisciplinary studies. Interdisciplinary studies is an American innovation, and began shortly after the launching of the first Sputnik. It was then that persons who considered themselves as isolationists in various subject matter fields decided that they could no longer exist in vacuums. Very soon then, the humanists came to realize that there would not be a split between the scientists and the humanists. And, of course, the scientists also realized that unless their discipline could be a humanizing and effective way of studying, exploring and experimenting, then science would be too dangerous as an academic discipline. Along with that realization came the idea that the behavorial sciences - anthropology, sociology, and psychology - should certainly be considered as the allied sciences. It was also necessary for all other subject specialists to realize that the humanities could no longer feature only the fine arts concept. And so it became a

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matter of pragmatism removed from John Dewey's idea and yet going along with his philosophy that it is good if it works. But a little deeper than the idea of pragmatism is the idea of functionalism. What is really organic? What is inorganic? How shall we educate man to survive? The idea of interdisciplinary, innovational and educational technique started as a result of our need to be able to live in and with crises.

Second, what are interdisciplinary studies? These are aspects of knowledge that have been taken from three or more disciplines of the academic area--not chronologically but thematically. The interdisciplinary studies are a fusion of knowledge that would be considered as continuous information for dealing with issues and problems that plague man. Therefore, the interdisciplinary core curriculum should be based upon the humanities.

The humanists might go further to say that the scientists should be seen teaching humanities. More than that, the various technologies should be in a laboratory as well as in a studio working with various aspects of music. Or, we could say that architecture is one of the most visible examples of a compendium of knowledge. It is archaeological evidence; it is technical evidence; and it is also environmental evidence. This is one tangible example of what the humanities are and what they might really begin to do.

The third aspect of what I really want to emphasize today is that there are three major characteristics of an interdisciplinary core. Creativity is the first characteristic. If persons are creative, then they can conceive of units of knowledge that can be pulled together in order to deal with issues; for example, depersonalization. One example of depersonalization is seen on the highways, the expressways, the throughways, and the time concept of space as depicted in some of the most modern styles of environmental architecture.

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What do you think of the literature that is expressive and reflective of the other arts, and the various forms of dialectology that are evidences of the various kinds of culture? What do you think about the idea of expressionism? What do you think about persons who would really prefer to consider various values as contrasted to antithetical values in order to express the characteristics of expressionism? What do you think about the ideas which have been a part of the dehumanizing process of omitting subject matter concerning Africans and Afro-Americans? What do you think of the third world concept - the idea of going beyond the Western tradition? We must think about creative ways of bringing in knowledge that has been left out for sociological reasons, for sociological techniques, for ways of dehumanizing the ethnic minorities and particularly black people. We must think about ways of creating units that will relate to students' interest and be relevant to their needs also.

It takes the first characteristic, that I am talking about, to have students realize what the identity crisis means; that is, what it means to belong or what the self-awareness concept means. Those of us who are teachers or who are professors or educators or those of us working in other strata of the society of today must realize that adaptability is a characteristic that is almost conceivably a part of the evolutionary factor which may be related to science, the arts, and culture. Evolution is not confined to Darwin. Evolution is not confined to Matthew Arnold or Matheus. Or, evolution is not confined to various scientific phenomena.

When we look at the interdisciplinary humanities core, I think we ought to realize, as we should with any other disciplinary core, that no two institutions have the same program, or have what would be considered model curricula. The best way to look at the interdisciplinary core is to consider that an interdisciplinary core should be uniquely tailored to fit the educational and sociological environment to which the curriculum model must be adapted. Beyond the idea of adaptability of subject matter, persons, who are concerned with teaching interdisciplinary humanities as

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well as other interdisciplinary core subject areas, should consider that isolation is in direct contrast to the interdisciplinary core. This is the reason why team teaching must be part of the methodology of interdisciplinary study. Therefore, persons should be able to sit down with others from various subject areas: science, art, media, psychology, and decide what they can do together. Team work in education is merely metaphorical when we consider what the idea of a team means. Unless professors or other persons are willing to adapt their teaching methodology to working as teams and not in shifts or in isolation or in competition with others, then we will not be able to adapt effectively to what is considered the interdisciplinary core. Interdisciplinary core models are economically expedient as well as resourceful because of the availability of resources.

The third characteristic of an interdisciplinary core is versatility of persons who must conceive of units and ideas in order to be able to do more than one thing. In order to relate science to music, one must be able to relate administrative problems to the various myths about mankind. In relating issues in the social sciences to that idea, one must be a part of the prevailing experience. I would like to think about one related problem in the African and Afro-American studies. Architecture has been mentioned previously, but, I would like to go back to architecture as one of the visual arts. Architecture is archaelogical evidence which we have that predates western man. So does sculpture, another visual art. The richest continent in the world is Africa. We need to encourage the people whom we teach at the college level to expand their knowledge and study of architecture and sculpture. We need more ethnomusiciologists, more engineers or persons who are interested in architecture to go to five or six countries in Africa to make in-depth studies of various styles of architecture. The information that will be obtained will be invaluable.

I would like to think about dance, theater, and music as being three of the performing arts of African culture which really reflect a live kind of

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experience - not a contrived experience as we would see in "Hair" or in any other stage play. To really live and be involved in a part of the experience itself is to see the theatre in Africa. Music and dance are a part of communication and a part of the ritual that cannot be separated from man's life.

We need to look at the interdisciplinary core for history. The time dates, the time lines of the various stages of man or the era that needs to be identified can be brought in through the interdisciplinary core. We cannot trust the commercial segment of America to give us information that is authentic, or to give us information we need. Therefore, we are in dire need of getting together interdisciplinary core projects, in all subject areas, that would be viable as well as educational for the academic array. We need to think about philosophy. But, we need to get away from the idea of empty rhetoric. In order to eliminate empty rhetoric as a part of the philosophy that we hear and which has destroyed the black culture, we need to have the knowledge -- knowledge that can be theorized, conceptualized as well as hypothesized. As we look at these various kinds of knowledge that would come through the interdisciplinary core, we would have the evolution of Africa and Afro-American studies that we are in dire need of today.

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Notes on Contributors II

THELMA J. ROUNDTREE, professor and chairman of the Division of Humanities, Saint Augustine's College, is a well known scholar and consultant in Humanities and Language Arts. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Humanities from Emory University and has done further studies at Columbia Univeristy and Yale University. She has been an invaluable participant and contributor to the African and Afro-American Studies Curriculum Project of the Six Institutions' Consortium. Her research and writings have been published in numerous educational journals. Her major work is *The Place of Humanities in Negro Colleges*. She is a member of several professional associations.

ALFRED SPRIGGS, Calloway Professor of Chemistry and chairman of Chemistry Department at Clark College, is a distinguished science educator and researcher. A director of numerous National Science Foundation Summer Institutes and American Chemical Society Short Courses, Dr. Spriggs has contributed much to the development and change in the curriculum and the teaching of chemistry in schools and colleges. He holds the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Washington University and membership in many scientific organizations. His varied research efforts in the life sciences have resulted in numerous publications in the *Science Education News, Journal of American Chemical Society, Journal of Organic Chemistry, Journal of Protozoology and Transactions of the National Institute of Science.*

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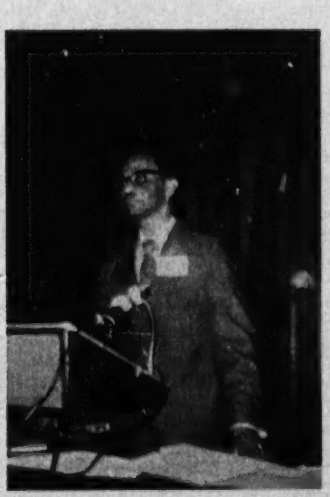

Perspectives From The Life Sciences

by

Alfred Spriggs

Ladies and Gentlemen, most of what I know about religion and modern philosophy comes from the comic strips Peanuts, Charlie Brown, and Pogo. You may recall that Pogo has, floating throughout it, a series of characters, one of which is a big rabbit. Also there is a bunch of little beetles. In a recent comic strip, these little beetles encountered this rabbit and one beetle said to another, "Is that a beast?" The other beetle said, "I don't know, let's ask him." So these little beetles asked this rabbit, sitting up there with his arms folded, "Is you a beast?" He said, "I am a rabbit by trade, but I do a little beasting on the side." And that is the position that I am in these days. I think this is the position most of us are in these days.

We have primary interests, such as chemists, social scientists, psychologists, etc., but it is incumbent on all of us to do a little beasting on the side. For those of us who are involved in science are faced with some very negative opinions about science and technology today, about man in general, and about relationships of people. Broadly speaking, our students have told us that man is a failure, and that

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science and technology are responsible. Now this attitude is expressed in many ways by many individuals. The hippies or the so called disenchanted youth are examples. They go off, and reject modern society by living in country side communes where they still need electricity. They drive to town to pick up supplies with which to live, and still depend upon the benefits that society's laws, communication and public health furnish. These are those groups who have gone so far as to reject all society on the grounds that it serves some military, social or political cause, and you see it every day as the various kinds of protests. They are the same people who are clamoring for the uplifting of the people from undeveloped lands, while admitting that science and technology must play a role in their advances. This is why I say that this dichotomy exists.

The chemist must be literate in the sciences, the social scientist must be literate in the natural sciences. Yet, all of us will agree after some reflection that science and technology have contributed to our humanity. If we are to deal constructively with ecological problems and social problems, we need to establish a direct and healthy relationship between man and his environment. The recognition of these concepts is basic in designing a core of studies, whether Black studies or otherwise, and in implementing any interdisciplinary core. If effort is directed toward the understanding of man and his environment, and it is understood that the environment is not only physical but social and psychological, I believe that meaningful curricula can be involved. This has been the basis of several proposed activities that we have been engaged in during the past five years, with support from the National Endowment of the Humanities that man must be aware of his environment, and that the word environment be interpreted by people in all areas of academic strata.

We, who are scientists, have thought of ourselves as pure, and we have often believed in a statement by Roger Bacon that there are two ways of obtaining knowledge, by argumentation and by experience. As you know, argumentation arrives at a conclusion but doubt

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may exist, but experience vanishes doubt. Today, this is a too narrow and limited concept for us scientists, who are Black, and who have as our primary academic experience to deal with Black students. One must use other devices other than argumentation and experience or experience. Literacy in sciences does not preclude literacy in social science and humanities. In fact, it enhances it, and conversely an awareness of the social, economic, humanistic, and psychological forces at work and the expertise in social sciences does not preclude literacy in the natural sciences. Samuel Massie alluded last night to Dr. Herman Branson who is President of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. This, I believe, is a prime example of the kind of person who has been involved in this kind of activity over the past several years. Some of you are familiar with him through the Phelps-Stokes Consortium.

The main point, however, is that what we are saying is not based upon the idea that modern man is neither acting unnaturally or naturally when he separates himself from nature. We talk now about doing our own thing, about what comes naturally. But if we reflect even for a moment we can see how much science and technology are a part of nature's evolutionary process.

So what about man? What has nature given man in his evolution? Well as you know, man is poorly equipped in many ways. His vision is terrible compared with the birds, his sense of semll is inferior to almost every four legged animal. His natural means of locomotion are relatively clumsy. He benefits from no camouflage, no claws, no large incisors, and in his birthday suit he is ill equipped to live in most of the world's climates. What then did nature give man? She developed in him a brain, and a neural system, a degree of dexterity that allows him to amplify his limited powers to abstract thought, language and the use of tools and energy. She gave it to all men, black and white, red and pink and blue. And man's survival and evolution are based upon a dynamic interplay of these and his successes. This in my opinion is the key to developing these interdisciplinary cores and relationships, that is, an emphasis on the dynamic interplay of forces whether they occur in Chemistry 231, which

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is a course I normally teach, or Social Institutions 105 which I have had some experience in team teaching. Where it occurs is irrevelant.

Let me describe very briefly the course development project which I have been involved in for the last three years in which we have been doing some beasting. As a result of some curricular studies that were done, it was incumbent on every department in the college to develop a course in his discipline which was humanistically oriented. We are in the process of developing a course called Modern Alchemy. You will recall something about the Alchemist. Their primary aim was to be able to transmute base elements into gold. The other was to find an elixir of life and the fountain of youth so that man will be free from disease. This is what scientists are trying to do today. We have involved people from various disciplines these four basic alchemical concepts, of earth, air, fire, water, utilizing the modular approach which has been alluded to. In the course of this it involved such studies as population problems. Is Dick Gregory right in an article which he wrote in Ebony recently in respect to genocide attempts of white racist toward the black race? Students have an opportunity to examine these kinds of problems in an alchemical context. Those of you who have been to Atlanta, when we talk about the unit on earth, again which has to do with drugs, we know that the Hunter Street area is the best laboratory that I know of for learning about drugs as they affect the lives of black people that live in that community.

Who of our scientists were involved in atomic bomb research and current research? We take the fact that these students begin to delve into these problems as they relate to their own individual lives. Water - who controls our water supply in the city of Atlanta? It is predicted that in five years the city of Atlanta will be a black politically controlled city if not economically controlled. When these youngsters assume these positions they need to know the purpose of the Environmental Control Protection Agency. What is the purpose of an agency that has to do with the control of air pollution. What is the purpose of an agency that has to do with population trends? What is the

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purpose of an agency that dispenses information regarding birth control? It is this kind of beasting that cuts across all disciplines. We would have in the unit on population people from social sciences, sociology to discuss this. In other words what we are saying is that what we are attempting to do is not make signs.

It has been my experience in these last twenty or so years that most of our colleagues are dealing in sign making. There is a little anecdote which I ran across that says: A man was carrying a whole bundle of dirty clothes down the street and he searched for a long time for a laundry to get these clothes done. He finally found a shop, with a sign in the window which said in big bold letters, Laundry Done Here. Well, the man was very happy. He went in this laundry and dumped the bundle on the counter. The man behind the counter looked at him and said, "What is this"? The man said, "I want to have this laundered." He said, "We don't do laundry here." "But you have a sign in the window that you laundry," the man said. The counter man replied, "Oh that--we only make signs, this is a print shop."

Be sure that we who are talking about the interdisciplinary core, those of us who are involved in these kinds of activities, are simply not sign makers. When we talk about Afro-American Studies, be sure that what we advertise is what really goes on in the classroom. It has been my experience that if we can do this, there will be a delight in the challenging and the unfinished, which evokes an urgency and indeed a need for ordering and integrating multiplicity, which is what science is all about. And this is what one means by viable academic education.

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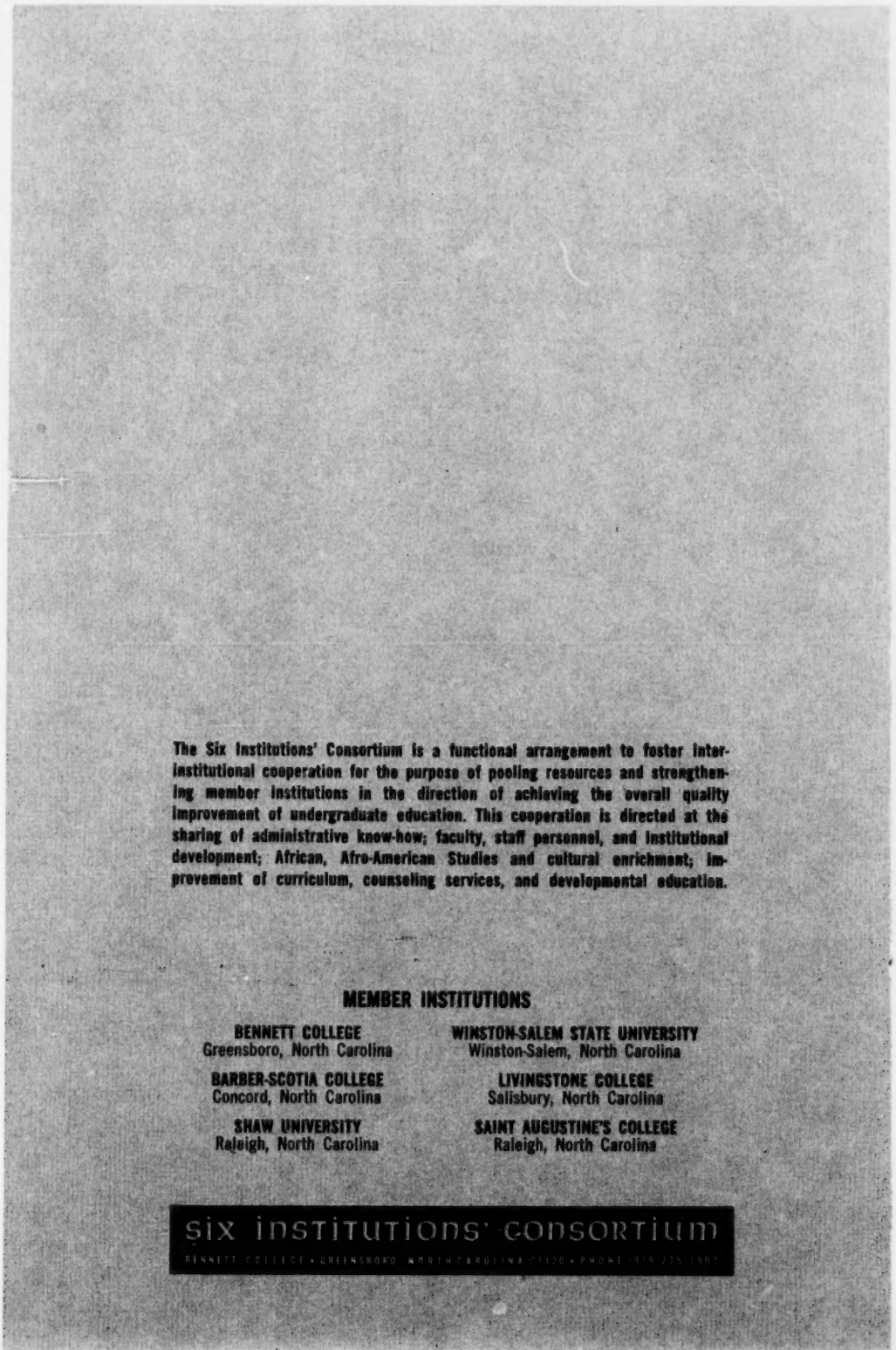

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